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Creation Assignment C1 - Proposal

‘Conduct a range of research from both academic industry sources to deliver a 2500 word final project report that focuses on the theory underpinning your final project.’

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Word Count: 2309 (2500 +/- 10%)

Final Project Proposal & Timeline

In the final season of my time at Tileyard Education, I feel compelled to explore collaborative progression in its rawest form. As a writer and artist who is inspired by working alone in a dark room, as well as in a large studio with a full creative team, I feel it is important to fully understand these equally productive yet opposite environments and how they affect the feel and soul of a piece of music.

I want this body of work to represent a movement from isolation to collaboration. As the album plays through from track one, each that follows will have an expanded contribution list, from writers, engineers, equipment and so on.

In the most literal sense, I will be creating a ten track digital album intended to be consumed as a mixtape with inter-connective audio and concepts. Whilst stylistically seated in the realm of 'pop', the nature of the product will be somewhat genre-bending, taking influence from modern alternative artists such as Billie Eilish, FKA Twigs, Seinabo Sey, Noah Cyrus, Tove Lo and so on. The sound and writing will largely reflect my personal style as an artist and I will oversee all aspects of creativity including but not limited to sound design, production, instrumentation, lyrics and melody, mix, master and recording locations. Throughout the creation of my product I will also carefully consider its marketability in context with the industry's current climate. The rise in popularity of apps like Tiktok has created an increased demand for shorter tracks, around two minutes, as well as short, isolated sound bytes with emphasis on vocal phrases and riffs.

After my time in education it will be important when going into professional environments and studios to understand quickly and efficiently the type of production needed to achieve an artist's creative vision. As a producer in a day-to-day role you are required to deal with a variety of artists, writers and collaborative people and it is important that you understand the range of different recording methods and how they can impact the timbre and mood of a piece of contemporary music. I feel this explorative process will help me not only in a professional sense but on a personal level to better understand myself as a creative and which environment I thrive best in. Further to the educational benefits of this task, I will also gain a large body of work moving forward as an artist, which is why I have decided to make sure that what I am doing reflects me personally.

The collaborative aspects included in this project will help me to reflect upon and solidify the connections I've made with my peers throughout my academic year and confidently assess our individual strengths and weaknesses, in order to form one unified team. I believe the role of a producer to be an organiser of people not just music, and so this aspect of my project will aid in the development of a skill which I will use throughout the rest of my career

Benchmarks For Success

The most obvious benchmark for success in this project will be to produce a professionally mastered, marketable and current album with a well-organised team of creatives behind it. Further to the literal production process, there will be some key milestones in place for the products release period including pitching and marketing within the UK and internationally across to Europe. The music industries current climate suggests roughly an 8-week lead time before the release of any product. This would also Factor in time prior to the beginning of the 8 weeks for the album to be securely placed in stores.

Post completion, my first benchmark for this album would be to obtain a distribution deal with a credible company within the UK under a territorial exclusive release basis. Territorial exclusivity allows for multiple deals to be made throughout Europe and further afield, expanding potential profitability through smaller percentage shares and maximised promotional focus.

Another benchmark for the success of my album will be in securing influential press both UK and internationally. Some examples of press coverage I will be aiming for include Clash Magazine, Rolling Stone, Wonderland, Pitchfork, Billboard and so on. As well as taste makers in music, I will aim for national promotion both physically (posters, billboards, newspapers) and on social media using prepaid targeted advertising across Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Google. With the right budget and execution of these methods I hope to achieve another benchmark I have set out for this project, which is a listener count in the initial two-week post release period of 100,000 on Spotify. The lifetime of an album or single, especially from artists under the radar, is now heavily decided upon by its earliest moments in stores. Advancements in technology mean that sharing, tagging and SEO data can largely determine how many times a song is added to playlists, both editorial and user curated, as well as the number of times it is randomly suggested to a listener within a streaming platform or digital store. It is this process that generates organic virality and in turn large profitability.

Approach

In my experience, approaching a project of this magnitude can be overwhelming. Therefore it is crucial that in my approach to tackling the project, I spend a good amount of time on my logistics and timeline. Considering the collaborative nature of my project, my first task will be to reach out to the various creatives I would like to involve. Once I know the availability of the team I will be working with, I can begin to structure the development of the album.

Opening the album with tracks that will not involve collaboration means that I can get a head start on the writing and production, whilst simultaneously liaising with the team regarding the later tracks. It will be important to schedule my days carefully during this period, and ensure communication remains open.

Due to limited studio availability I plan to hold writing sessions at my home studio. This will allow for a more flexible schedule, resulting in less conflicts between individual diaries. Before any work begins I would like to hold a meeting in which roles are discussed and solidified. This will prevent any confusion later down the line in regards to where each person's focus should be held.

A case study I have carefully considered is "Nirvana's first record, Bleach, fabled to have taken just 30 hours of recording time." (Colletti) Industry stories like this could arguably be blamed for the now common underestimation of the time needed to put together a full album. Although many bands and artists now greatly reduce on-site studio time in the creation of a record, it is important to acknowledge the hours of preparation conducted prior to these sessions and so I plan on making this my first task in my approach.

Another big part of my approach will be in assessing my back catalogue to date. As a prolific songwriter my hard drive is full of ideas, lyrics, and scratch productions from over the last few years. From my research I have found that many well-known artists often discuss how a handful of tracks from their albums are either resurfaced back catalogue or benched ideas. I recently took an idea from critically-acclaimed songwriter Jamie Cullum, who "took a lot of

inspiration for (his) songs from general notepad writing – kind of journals, if you want to call them that – daily witterings and pages with things written down when (he) was trying to work through certain problems or issues in (his) life.” This has and will continue to aid me in carving out the concept and theme of the album.

In summary I am taking a three three-part approach to this project; plan, write, record. It will be essential that each part is executed thoroughly and under regular periodic assessment, as it will act as a foundation for the work to follow.

In order to follow my creative concept of a gradual contribution expanse throughout the record, I will put together two groups of writers, A and B. Group A will consist of myself and two other creators, and group B will be five in total. Each group will compose three songs in three sessions, which I will then work on polishing before collaborating with outsourced instrumentalists and sound designers to complete production ready for mix and master.

I have previously used alternative approaches to the Creations of my EP’s and singles, especially when working to more flexible deadlines. My natural approach would be to only focus on writing the music as a starting point, then consider the recording process and production requirements once a full album of material has been written. Due to the nature of this project, I feel that taking a more relaxed and less scheduled approach to songwriting would cause serious timing issues further ahead.

This method would also affect the functionality of the aforementioned planned collaborative writing. I could have chosen to approach writing the material for the album alone, only introducing more people further into the production process, and this is how I have traditionally functioned as a writer in the past. “Many of my songs were written without songwriting partners. Are they less good than the ones where the job was split, or where a partner modified, added to, or rejected my ideas, or I theirs? I can't answer that, but certainly musical partnerships have led me to places I might not otherwise have gone” A few days and more than a few books in to my proposal research, I concluded that at unless I take a brand new approach to this project, I will not feel fully challenged, and in turn, not fully satisfied.

Another approach to cultivating an album commonly seen amongst commercial writers and artists is to outsource songs from other catalogues. This route can save time providing a publisher or label is enlisted to reach out to a pool of creatives using their existing contacts. it would be unrealistic to personally attempt to navigate this route without the support of a publisher or label especially within the time restraints given due to lack of reputation. A writer's willingness to agree to cut a track will often depend on the potential profit margin and added value to their name.

Project timeline

Week	Tasks	Aims
1	- Explore back catalogues and make decisions on any existing material to bring forward into the project. - Compose/finalise concepts for first (non-collaborative) album tracks. These will likely include any back catalogue content. - Outline concepts/ideas for further 7 tracks - Group A & B collaborative writers together and assign track concepts - Schedule writing sessions for weeks two, three and four. - Zoom meeting with the technical team (engineers, mix, master, session musicians) to discuss timeline and availability.	- Team solidified - Planning and schedules complete - Existing tracks organised - Basic outline of song concepts moving forward
2	- Teams calendar and informative PDF send out. This will contain a project overview and schedule confirmation. - First writing session with group A - First writing session with group B - Two personal production sessions, for first four non-collaborative tracks	- Two new songs written for the album - Production under way for first four tracks
3	- First production session to work on tracks 5 and 6. - Begin mix on first 4 tracks - Second writing session with group A - Second writing session with group B	- Production under way for two more tracks - Four new songs written in total - First rough mix on first four tracks
4	- Third writing session with group A - Third writing session with group B - 2 x production sessions for tracks 7 and 8 - 2 x production sessions for tracks 9 and 10	- All album tracks written and ready for production - Production underway for final two tracks
5	- Full album production overview meeting - Full listening session, check for any creative and/or technical amendments - Final polishing session	- Technical team clearance on productions - Amendments outlined & addressed
6	- Mixing (tracks 1 - 4)	- Independant tracks at final mix stage
7	- Mixing (tracks 5 - 7)	- Group A at final mix stage
8	- Mixing (tracks 8 - 10)	- Group B at final mix

	- Send album for mastering	stage
9	- Master	- All 10 tracks mastered for release

I am approaching this project cautiously, having challenged myself to new methods of working. Despite the timeline ahead being much more rigorous than my usual working boundaries, I feel confident that the structure I have built will aid the development of the album overall by ensuring processes move consistently and micro deadlines are met. I am looking forward to the comparative working environments and believe that in analysing the results from each one, I will gain a further and invaluable comprehension of how collaboration and environment can affect the feel and personalisation of a piece of music. I predict the outcome of the development method will make for a body of music that gradually changes shape as the listener plays through, which I believe to be an interesting and submersive concept. Whilst collaboration can be exciting and expansive, I move forward apprehensively, with consideration to the increased amount of factors that have the potential to affect the project timeline and growth. I will prepare to fully utilise my network in the event of a roadblock, be it scheduling conflicts, creative disagreement, delivery failure etc. Should these events occur, it will be essential to fall back on a wider support network, so I plan to be open and transparent in discussing the project amongst my industry peers throughout the process. In summary I feel I have adequately prepared for the work ahead both personally and technically, and move forward with confidence and excitement for the resulting musical catalogue. There is much to be gained from a positive project result, in both my professional and personal development within the wider music industry.

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